

# Character Class

## Stealthy Rascals 4

### Stealthy Rascal Personalities

*By Skip Williams*



In [the past few installments of Character Class](#), we considered races and equipment for stealthy and skillful characters. We conclude our look into stealthy characters by considering some less concrete aspects of character creation -- how the character acts and why the character took up a career of stealth in the first place.

No matter how you choose to meet the challenges of adventuring, you'll face many perils as a stealthy rascal. Perhaps the greatest danger comes from hazards you fail to notice or anticipate -- the hidden trap you don't find, the lurking ambushers you don't spot, the stealthy footfalls you don't hear, or the surly foe who somehow beats you to the punch. Stealthy rascals often make their own trouble by sticking their noses into places they don't belong or taking on challenges they can't handle. Stealthy rascals face death or dismemberment at least as often as other characters, but their endeavors often carry the added risk of profound embarrassment, imprisonment, and social ostracism. Your character has made a decision, consciously or unconsciously, to face these difficulties -- perhaps because of the potential rewards.

Most stealthy rascals value the same kinds of rewards that other characters enjoy such as wealth, reputation, and the knowledge that they have experienced and accomplished things that most folks can only dream about. The best rascals, however, require a thirst for something more. Many simply adore living on the edge of disaster, others relish unraveling knotty problems, ferreting out hidden things, or matching wits with foes they've never met before.

### Some Stealthy Personality Types

You don't need to adopt any particular temperament or motivation to play a successful stealthy rascal. As noted earlier, a certain tolerance for taking risks and meeting new challenges helps. You might, however, try to play against type with a shy or careful rascal. If you're new to the game, try one of the following:

#### Analytical

These characters relish intellectual challenges of all kinds. They value mental skills over physical training. Many such people become rascals so they can test their intellectual mettle in as many different ways as possible. Others choose the way of the rascal because they feel stealth and deception are more challenging (and sublime) than other approaches to adventuring life.

The character might favor a mental approach because he isn't particularly strong or tough. Or the character might have a finely tuned body and fast reflexes, which he has achieved through careful training and a thorough understanding of his physical limits and potential (thus turning his physical preparations into mental exercises). The character might long to plan and execute the perfect caper (approaching problems much as an artist addresses a blank canvas), or he might consider stealth simply as a job -- albeit one he does well.

The analytical rascal might have been forced to learn to think his way out of trouble early in life. Perhaps he grew up as a street urchin or lived under an oppressive government. Or, the character might be lazy, timid, or simply unwilling to get his hands dirty. Such characters find using their brains easier, safer, or less painful than facing danger head on.

Analytical characters seldom take risks without carefully weighing the potential rewards and consequences. They



dislike plunging into the unknown without first stopping to collect a little information first. They're capable of taking quick action, but they're always thinking about what they're up against and considering changing approaches when necessary.

Monks, rangers, and scouts are often analytical, because these classes require self-discipline and a broad base of knowledge. Analytical rogues aren't unknown, especially rogues who concentrate on tasks such as picking locks, disarming traps, gathering information, or bluffing foes.

Analytical characters often have lawful alignments which suit their deliberate natures. While odd, it's also possible to be analytical and chaotic. Such characters may be analytical when time allows, but when the pressure's on, they make snap judgments now and regret the results later. An analytical character might be good or evil. A good character who is analytical might have a reflective nature, pondering the effects his actions could have on others. An evil analytical character might spend hours thinking of the best plan for gaining some sort of advantage while denying any benefits to others.

Dwarves or elves are often analytical. Dwarves are known for deliberate action, and elves often take the long view. Many gnomes, humans, and half-elves are analytical, but none of these races are specifically prone to being analytical. Halflings and half-orcs usually are too fond of living by the seat of their pants to develop analytical natures.

### **Avaricious**

Avaricious rascals are simply greedy. They become rascals because that's the best way to ensure that they get a prime cut of the loot (or perhaps pick up some goodies they don't need to share with anyone). Others might feel that the world owes them a living -- preferably as easy a living as possible. They may be willing to share the spoils from their successes -- after all, several characters can carry more loot than a single character can. Some have a taste for particular kinds of items -- gems, jewels, magical gear, or anything else unusual. The desired items might not be valuable, but they have some esthetic appeal for the character.

The avaricious character might come from a background of extreme privation. Perhaps the character comes from serf or slave stock and was never allowed to truly own anything. An avaricious nature might be the character's way to make up for lost time. Perhaps the character grew up in opulent surroundings and never learned how to earn luxuries (or cared to do so). Some avaricious characters have artistic or creative personalities, though they might not always have any skill at artistic expression. In any case, the character has a passion for collecting things.

Avariciousness usually goes hand in hand with a chaotic alignment, because an avaricious character is fundamentally self-indulgent. Avariciousness isn't entirely incompatible with a lawful alignment, however. A lawful avaricious character usually is a careful collector who seeks to build a collection of particular historical, esthetic, or scholarly interest. Avaricious characters are evil more often than good. Evil avaricious characters will lie, cheat, steal, or kill to feed their greed. Good avaricious characters usually find benign ways to satisfy their lust for accumulating things.

Avaricious characters usually aren't interested in any endeavor that doesn't hold the promise of some kind of reward, though they can work toward a goal with great patience if necessary. When things get tough, they're usually willing to grab some loot and flee to a safe place -- or at least to look for a more lucrative venture.

Rogues are often avaricious. They see the accumulation of wealth as a badge of honor and a measure of their success as rascals. Scouts and rangers are seldom avaricious, but some are prone to collecting trophies or gathering mementos of their adventures. Monks, being ascetic, are almost never avaricious, though some monks might seek non-material treasures or accomplishments, such as hearing music performed, climbing mountains, or other experiences or marks of distinction.

Half-orcs, halflings, and dwarves frequently are avaricious. Half-orcs and halflings often seek wealth and comfort. Dwarves are infamous for their love of gems and precious metals. Gnomes and humans aren't especially prone to avariciousness, but they're hardly immune to greed or compulsive collecting. Elves and half-elves usually prefer to lead unencumbered lives and aren't often attached to material things, though they might crave notoriety or meaningful experiences, much as discussed above for monks.

### **Incorrigible**

These characters just don't know when to quit. They'll push ahead through lethal traps, antagonize deadly foes, or follow a trail that's long gone cold. A stealthy rascal's wide array of skills and special abilities appeals to these characters because they don't run out when used -- the character can rely on them as long as she can manage to

walk or crawl forward.

An incorrigible character might have a taste for trickery and practical jokes. Such a character isn't satisfied with merely defeating a foe -- she must also inflict some embarrassment as well. After all, anyone can kill a creature or steal something, but it takes an artist to make defeat really sting.

Other incorrigibles have a thirst for justice or vengeance. Such characters feel the need for complete victories that can stand up in a court of law or that will ring true in history books. Others might have a streak of altruism that leads them to face danger or put forth extraordinary effort on others' behalf.

A few incorrigibles simply feel the need to do things in the most difficult way possible to show that they're a cut above anyone else.

An incorrigible character might seek to remedy an old injustice or to defeat a lifelong foe. Perhaps the character's family or country was the victim of some vile crime or conspiracy, either during the character's lifetime or in the distant past. Other incorrigibles might be convinced that most (or any) achievement is possible with the right tools and the willingness to see the task through to the end. Still others might see themselves as virtually indestructible because they'll always find a way to escape an otherwise fatal blow.

Incorrigibles have a hard time giving up, though they're capable of retreating if that seems necessary to ensure that they'll survive for another attempt. They also usually have difficulty passing up potential challenges -- they always want to stir the pot if they can. They're capable of delaying action when they're engaged in something important, but they usually aren't satisfied until they can return and take up what they've set aside.

Any stealthy rascal might be incorrigible. Incorrigible rogues are often tricksters or flamboyant people. Incorrigible scouts, rangers, or monks often seek justice. Any incorrigible rascal might have a lifelong enemy.

Both chaotic and lawful characters might prove incorrigible. Chaotic incorrigibles seem heedless of danger and can't resist meddling in anything. Lawful incorrigibles generally stick to their tasks despite setbacks or hardships. Likewise, incorrigibles can be either evil or good. Evil incorrigibles simply refuse to recognize that they're being bad. Good incorrigibles are willing to undertake any hardship to protect innocents and hold back the darkness.

Halflings and gnomes have a reputation for incorrigibility. They're known to be all but fearless and quite willing to take on challenges that seem too big for them. Dwarves are known for their stubbornness and tenacity. Humans and half-elves can prove to be as saucy as any halfling or as obstinate as any dwarf. Half-orcs aren't known for the ability to stay focused on a task, but they can be impulsive and volatile.

## **Inquisitive**

Some stealthy characters have an appetite for unraveling mysteries and plumbing the depths of the unknown. A rascal's ability to slip into places unseen and sometimes literally to open locked doors appeals to these characters' sense of adventure and thirst for exploration. Such characters regard the dangers they face as necessary discomforts that must be endured before they can learn new things.

An inquisitive character might merely have a curious streak. Such a character can't help wondering what lies inside closed chests or beyond locked doors and often can't resist peeking around the next corner. Other inquisitives crave new experiences and cheerfully will undertake almost anything they haven't tried before. Some have eclectic interests and spend their lives probing the secrets of nature, the intricacies of machinery, the workings of alien cultures, or whatever else catches their fancy.

Inquisitive rascals are as likely to try to communicate with strangers or unfamiliar creatures as they are to attack them. In a fight, however, an inquisitive rascal usually can do well, because the character isn't afraid to get into the thick of things.

Any stealthy rascal might be inquisitive. Rangers and scouts with inquisitive streaks often become great explorers or students of nature. Inquisitive rogues frequently tinker with locks, traps, or unusual architecture.



Inquisitive characters tend to drop what they're doing so that they can investigate something new, which makes this personality well suited for chaotic characters. Some inquisitives, however, might adopt a disciplined approach to their investigations. They might keep notes, explore things according to a well-laid plan, or both. This kind of inquisitiveness suits lawful characters. An inquisitive character might be good or evil. Good inquisitives are often satisfied with the joys of discovery. An evil inquisitive, however, usually desires some sort of gain from a discovery, either material goods or perhaps just a little knowledge that might prove useful later on.

Gnomes and halflings are well known for their urge to explore and experiment, though a character of any race might become an inquisitive. Many dwarves, for example, yearn to dig new mines and explore deep caverns. Elves and half-elves often examine vast woodlands in minute detail. Human wanderlust is famous, and many half-orcs eagerly blaze fresh trails to distant places, new or old.

## In Conclusion

As noted earlier, these are only a few options for sneaky characters. Keep in mind that the examples presented here can be combined to create more complex characters. For example, your character might combine an analytical mind with an inquisitive heart.

You can create your own personality types as well. Consider why your character chose a stealthy profession and what life experiences led up to that decision. Also consider how the character's personality and history affects the way the character meets challenges.

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To learn more about stealthy rascals, be sure to read our installment on [character roles](#) and [stealthy races](#).

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## About the Author

Skip Williams keeps busy with freelance projects for several different game companies and was the Sage of *Dragon Magazine* for many years. Skip is a co-designer of the D&D 3rd Edition game and the chief architect of the *Monster Manual*. When not devising swift and cruel deaths for player characters, Skip putters in his kitchen or garden (rabbits and deer are not Skip's friends) or works on repairing and improving the century-old farmhouse that he shares with his wife, Penny, and a growing menagerie of pets.

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